

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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The Publishing House as a Factor in Church Life

Shall we make an argument to set forth the place and importance of the Publishing House in the policy of the church? Is it really necessary to laboriously convince any one that we ought to have a Publishing House, and that it ought to be as strong and efficient, as ably conducted, as well equipped as money and brains could make it? We hardly think that there is any call to do such primitive work. No one questions these propositions. We may however assent to them, and yet be far from that intense conviction, that earnestness, that active interest in regard to the subject which is essential to produce the best results. Every farmer, for example, will admit the necessity of a farm equipment, but while some are not content unless they have the very best, others, on the other hand, are satisfied with any old thing. Now suppose several thousand of these average farmers, we mean farmers as you find them, good, bad and indifferent, should associate themselves together to run a co-operative farm, a joint enterprise, a company affair; whether or not that co-operative property should have a good equipment would depend doubtless upon the composite character of the company. If a majority of the company were slipshod farmers, there would be a rickety wagon, grape vine traces and spavined horses. Instead of the wheat there would come up weeds, and instead of the corn there would come up briars, and it would be for an everlasting sign of shabbiness.

Apply this homely illustration to a church publishing house, and you will perhaps get a very good idea of the character of that church. Its members are all associated together to run a co-operative enterprise for the dissemination of religious knowledge, for mutual encouragement, information, cultivation in all spiritual and godly directions, propagation of important doctrines, the spread of the divine kingdom, the salvation of men. It is in a marked and special manner the city set on a hill, the light set upon a candlestick, the lifted beacon blazing aloft to help light the darkness of the world. One would logically think that an enterprise having such objects, would, in its equipment, in the support it received, in the matter of talent and ability expended upon its administration, be all that wisdom and experience and money could command in all the elements of excellence and power.

To make our Publishing House answer this description, and be not simply a credit to the church, a sort of pretty toy which we take pleasure in exhibiting to admiring friends, but an engine of power, a pioneer,

blazing the road of the church to new victories, wider conquests; an unfailing, invincible ally by the side of our pastors, helping them onward and upward with their work; an educative and progressive force among our members, bestirring them to all godly activities, keeping them in sympathetic touch with the great Brotherhood, inspiring each one to become a factor in the building up of a great fraternity; all this and much more, for there is much more, should be the aspiration of every brother and sister in our beloved church, who longs to see that church take its rightful place among the great agents of a higher civilization and a better righteousness in the world.

Shall we go on and tell of the direct and weighty influence of the Publishing House on the future of the brotherhood in its work for the children thro' our Sunday School literature? Can words measure that influence? Shall we also call attention to the influence of our periodicals, especially the EVANGELIST, as a bond of union, sympathy, fellowship, between our widely scattered members? Is not this one consideration worth far more than the Publishing House has ever cost us, or ever can cost us? You cannot put a money value upon some things, the salvation of the soul, for instance; no more can you put a money value upon those spiritual influences and agencies which go to help forward that salvation, to extend it to your children, your community and into the ever widening field beyond.

We have only space for two important conclusions. "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." What our Publishing House wants is that "great company." Those who buy the EVANGELIST are its real publishers. Not even a poor paper, nor the very poorest can be supported by a few subscribers. It can buy neither paper, nor labor, nor talent. It must have the "great company." It is the first class patronage that makes the first class paper, and first class patronage means a "great company" who regularly take the paper and as regularly pay for it. Those who do this enable the Publishing House to send them a good paper, and what is more important, it enables the Publishing House to send a good paper to thousands of others, and to represent the church before the world with a first class periodical. Still more it enables the Publishing House to supply the rising generation with the very best literature. This is what you do when you buy the product of your Publishing House and more emphatically when you use your utmost influence to get every one else around you to do the same, and thereby create, and maintain, and increase the "great company" who "publish the word."